



Carlsbad **ReadsTogether**

A Community Reading Program

Resource Guide

A Message From the Mayor

“Carlsbad Reads Together” is a communitywide reading program presented by Carlsbad City Library and sponsored in part by the Friends of the Carlsbad Library. The program, patterned after successful communitywide reading programs across the country, encourages community dialogue and fosters a love of reading.

The book chosen for Carlsbad Reads Together 2010 is John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. I invite everyone who lives in, works in or visits Carlsbad to participate by reading and discussing the book and attending one or several of the Library’s events.

Look forward to seeing you at the Library,

Claude A. “Bud” Lewis

About
Travels With Charley: In Search of America

“...I discovered that I did not know my own country. I, an American writer, writing about America, was working from memory, and the memory is at best a faulty, warpy reservoir. I had not heard the speech of America, smelled the grass and trees and sewage, seen its hills and water, its color and quality of light. I knew the changes only from books and newspapers. But more than this, I had not felt the country for twenty-five years.... So it was that I determined to look again, to try to rediscover this monster land.”

– John Steinbeck,
Travels With Charley: In Search of America.

In the fall of 1960, John Steinbeck, at that time one of America’s best-known writers, embarked on a cross-country trip to reacquaint himself with a country he felt he no longer knew. Accompanied by his poodle, Charley, and driving a specially outfitted truck he christened Rocinante, Steinbeck spent three months and covered 10,000 miles traveling from New York to California and back again. Along the way he met terse New Englanders, fell in love with Montana, experienced a disconcerting return to his hometown of Salinas, and witnessed both the best and worst of the country.

Travels With Charley is at once an intimate look at one of America’s greatest authors, as well as a vivid picture of America at the brink of the tumultuous 1960s.

John Steinbeck Biography

John Ernst Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, on Feb. 27, 1902 to a businessman and a former teacher who nurtured her children's love of reading. Steinbeck spent much of his youth outdoors, his love of the Salinas Valley evident in much of his writing. At 14, he knew he wanted to be a writer.

After graduating in 1919 from Salinas High School, Steinbeck sporadically attended classes at Stanford University but left without a degree.

His first novel, *Cup of Gold*, was published in 1929 but attracted scant attention. His next novels, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *To a God Unknown*, received respectable notices but sold few copies.

In 1930, Steinbeck married Carol Henning. From 1930-1936, they lived in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula, where Steinbeck wrote stories and novels, achieving financial success with the 1935 publication of *Tortilla Flat*. His work grew increasingly political at the end of the decade, with three working class novels: *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

During World War II, Steinbeck contributed to the war effort with two novels: *The Moon Is Down* and *Bombs Away*. In 1943, the Herald Tribune sent him to England as a war correspondent. Many of his dispatches were later collected in *Once There Was a War*.

When he returned from the war, he married a second time, to Gwendolyn Conger. They had two sons, Thomas and John.

Cont. John Steinbeck Biography

In the 1940s, he wrote *Cannery Row*, *The Wayward Bus*, *The Pearl* and *A Russian Journal*. By 1950, he was married for a third time, to Elaine Scott, and living permanently in New York City. In 1952, he published *East of Eden*.

Steinbeck was ever restless, ever experimental in his prose. He would write plays, film scripts, novels, short stories and a few poems.

In the 1960s, Steinbeck wrote three books in which he registered the mood of his country: *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) and *America and Americans* (1966). He also traveled to Vietnam to cover the war, sending dispatches to U.S. newspapers called "Letters to Alicia." Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962.

He died on December 20, 1968.

Other Works by John Steinbeck available in the Carlsbad City Library

Fiction

*The Acts of King Arthur
and His Noble Knights*

Cannery Row

*Cup of Gold: A Life of Sir
Henry Morgan, Buccaneer*

East of Eden

The Grapes of Wrath

In Dubious Battle

The Long Valley

The Moon Is Down

Of Mice and Men

The Pearl

The Red Pony

*The Short Reign of Pippin
IV: A Fabrication*

Sweet Thursday

To a God Unknown

Tortilla Flat

The Wayward Bus

*The Winter of Our
Discontent*

Nonfiction

America and Americans

*Log for the Sea of
Cortez*

Carlsbad Reads Together Events

All events are free, unless otherwise noted, and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. For additional event information, please visit www.carlsbadlibrary.org or call 760-602-2026.

■ Discussion groups for *Travels With Charley: In Search of America*

Read *Travels With Charley* and then join other community members for a lively discussion about the book. For more information about book discussions, call 760-602-2038 or visit www.carlsbadlibrary.org.

CARLSBAD CITY LIBRARY on Dove Lane

1775 Dove Lane, Gowland Meeting Room

Thursday, April 1 at 7 p.m.; Wednesday, April 7 at 2 p.m.;

Monday, April 26 at 7 p.m.

GEORGINA COLE LIBRARY

1250 Carlsbad Village Drive, Community Room

Tuesday, April 6 at 7 p.m.; Thursday, April 8 at 2 p.m.

LIBRARY LEARNING CENTER

Tuesday, April 13 at 6 p.m. (Spanish-language discussion)

■ Carlsbad Playreaders Presents *The Grapes of Wrath*

by John Steinbeck; directed by Sheri Allen

Monday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Ruby G. Schulman Auditorium, Carlsbad City Library, 1775 Dove Lane

Steinbeck's classic, adapted by Frank Galati, is brought to life on stage in this play reading. Suggested donation of \$5 general/\$1 students.

■ Carlsbad Reads Together Family Event

Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey (1993, rated G)

Wednesday, April 28 at 3:30 p.m.

Georgina Cole Library Community Room

A kid-friendly event. The remarkable adventure story of three domesticated pets—two dogs and a cat—who embark on an extraordinary journey through untamed wilderness to find their way home.

Carlsbad Reads Together Events

■ Steinbeck Celebration

Saturday, April 24

Ruby G. Schulman Auditorium, Carlsbad City Library, 1775 Dove Lane

Join us for events celebrating author John Steinbeck.

11 a.m.: Steinbeck authority Dr. Susan Shillinglaw examines the author's life and work.

2 p.m.: Author Thomas Steinbeck discusses his work as well as that of his legendary father. Free tickets, limit two per person, will be given out beginning an hour before the talk. Thomas Steinbeck's books will be available for sale and signing. Cash and check only; portion of proceeds benefit Friends of the Carlsbad Library.

■ Carlsbad Reads Together Movies

All screenings take place at the Carlsbad City Library's Schulman Auditorium, except the April 7 film, which will be at Georgina Cole Library.

April 7 at 6 p.m. *Horatio's Drive* (2004, not rated, 106 minutes)

Georgina Cole Library, Community Room

Join us before *Horatio's Drive* at 5:30 p.m. for a special presentation from the Library's History Room about the travels of early Carlsbad residents.

April 14 at 6 p.m. *East of Eden* (1954, rated PG, 118 minutes)

April 21 at 6 p.m. *Of Mice and Men* (1992, rated PG-13, 115 minutes)

April 28 at 6 p.m. *The Red Pony* (1949, not rated, 91 minutes)

■ Travel Writing Workshop

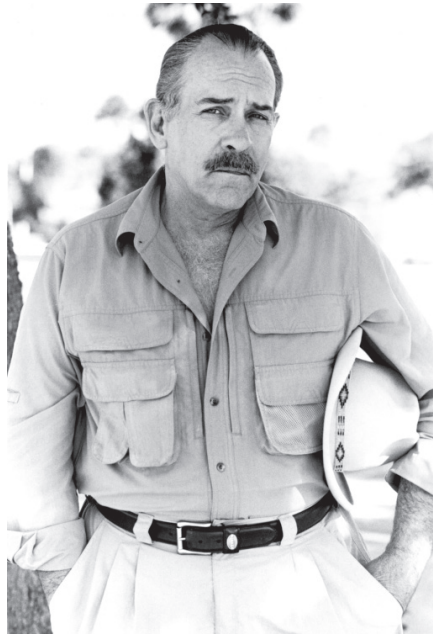
Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Georgina Cole Library, Community Room

1250 Carlsbad Village Drive

Those who love to travel and long to write about it are invited to a travel writing workshop with writer, photographer, teacher and speaker Cynthia Dial. Workshop is free; registration is required as space is limited. For more information or to reserve, call 760-602-2400 x8149.

Thomas Steinbeck Biography



Bill Rich Photography

Thomas Steinbeck began his career in the 1960s as a combat photographer in Vietnam. Along with his writing and producing obligations, Mr. Steinbeck is in demand as a lecturer on American literature, creative writing and the communication arts.

Mr. Steinbeck serves as an honorary board member at the Stella Adler Theatre in Hollywood. He is active on the boards at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California, and the Center for Steinbeck Studies in San Jose.

He has written and sold numerous original screenplays and documentaries, as well as adaptations of his father's work. Thomas Steinbeck lives in California with his wife.

Books by Thomas Steinbeck

Down to a Soundless Sea

In the Shadow of the Cypress

Additional Resources About John Steinbeck

Web sites

The National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California:
<http://www.steinbeck.org/>

The Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies at
San Jose State University: <http://as.sjsu.edu/steinbeck/>

Books

The Intricate Music: A Biography of John Steinbeck by
Thomas Kiernan. Little, Brown, 1979.

John Steinbeck by Catherine Reef. Clarion Books, 1996.

John Steinbeck: A Biography by Jay Parini. H. Holt, 1995.

John Steinbeck: The California Years by Brian St. Pierre.
Chronicle Books, 1983.

A Journey Into Steinbeck's California by Susan Shillinglaw.
Roaring Forties Press, 2006.

Looking for Steinbeck's Ghost by Jackson J. Benson.
University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

*Obscene in the Extreme: The Burning and Banning of John
Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath* by Rick Wartzman. Public
Affairs, 2008.

The Other Side of Eden: Life With John Steinbeck by John
Steinbeck IV and Nancy Sommer Steinbeck. Prometheus
Books, 2001.

Steinbeck Country by Steve Crouch. Bonanza Books, 1973.

The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer
by Jackson J. Benson. Viking Press, 1984

DVD

Writings of John Steinbeck. C-SPAN Archives, 2006.

Discussion Questions for *Travels With Charley*

1. Why does Steinbeck set out on his trip across America? What do you think he is hoping to accomplish?
2. What kind of traveler is Steinbeck? How does he describe himself? What kind of traveling companion is Charley?
3. What role does Charley play in the book?
4. To what extent does geography reflect or cause Americans' attitudes then and now? What regional attitudes did Steinbeck encounter? Are they different or similar today?
5. What anxieties do people express to Steinbeck, and how do those fears affect the political atmosphere? Are there similarities between that time and ours?
6. What is Steinbeck's attitude toward immigration and the idea of America as a melting pot? What did it mean to be an American in the 1960s vs. today?
7. Of the many people Steinbeck meets on his trip, is there one that stands out to you? Why?
8. What conclusions about the United States and Americans has Steinbeck made at the end of his trip?

Library Locations and Hours

Carlsbad City Library
1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92011
760-602-2049

Georgina Cole Library
1250 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008
760-434-2870

Library Hours
Monday – Thursday 9 a.m.–9 p.m.
Friday & Saturday 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday 1–5 p.m.

Carlsbad City Library Learning Center
3368 Eureka Place
Carlsbad, CA 92008
760-931-4500

Library Learning Center Hours
Monday – Thursday 11 a.m.–6 p.m.
Friday 11 a.m.–5 p.m.
Closed Saturday & Sunday

www.carlsbadlibrary.org



CARLSBAD READS TOGETHER
is sponsored in part by
the Friends of the Carlsbad Library

Special thanks to Mysterious Galaxy Books

